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PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHKI #1833 3411446  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 071446Z DEC 06  
FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5276  
INFO RUEHC/DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE  
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK

UNCLAS KINSHASA 001833

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E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [CG ELECTIONS](#)  
SUBJECT: KABILA INAUGURATED AS PRESIDENT OF THE THIRD  
REPUBLIC

REF: KINSHASA 1791

¶1. Summary: Joseph Kabila was inaugurated as the President of the Democratic Republic of Congo on December 6. Numerous African heads of state as well as high level international delegations attended the ceremony in Kinshasa. Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao headed the USG Presidential Delegation. Jean-Pierre Bemba and other leaders of his Movement for the Liberation of the Congo (MLC) political party did not attend the ceremony. Kabila's inaugural address highlighted the needs of the DRC and his plan to pursue good governance and economic development. End summary.

¶2. Joseph Kabila's December 6 inauguration day was peaceful, if hectic, as the city filled with Congolese and foreign dignitaries for the investiture of the DRC's first democratically-elected president in over 40 years. Principal guests at the ceremony included the Heads of State of South Africa, Angola, Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Gabon, Togo, Burundi, and Namibia. The former presidents of both Mozambique and Namibia attended the inauguration as well. Numerous heads of government or ministerial-level delegations represented other African, European, and Asian countries. Neither Uganda or Rwanda were represented at the ceremony.

¶3. The US Presidential Delegation was headed by Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao. Belgium sent a delegation headed by Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt, Great Britain sent its Deputy Prime Minister, France sent the President of its Constitutional Council, and Germany was represented by its Foreign Minister. Aldo Ajello, Special Representative of the European Union to the Great Lakes Region, attended. The United Nations was represented by Jean-Marie Guehenno, head of Peacekeeping Operations.

¶4. Kabila's inaugural address lasted thirty minutes and centered on an acknowledgment of the enormous amount of work which faces the country. He made a strong call for an end to both corruption and impunity, noting that "the prisons of the State will be open to all those who place themselves outside of the law." Kabila included a strong note of thanks to the Independent Electoral Commission for its work organizing the elections, and he saluted the "remarkable solidarity" of the international community during the DRC Transition.

¶5. Kabila emphasized the need for the DRC to demand "the trilogy of good governance, democracy, and respect for human rights." He noted that these three pillars must support economic development in any country, and cited the importance of international support to the continuing progress of the DRC, saying his goal would be "the diplomacy of development." He noted the extremely high level of poverty in the Congo

and the need for the GDRC to address basics across society, including infrastructure, roads, employment, schooling, housing, and health care.

¶16. Kabila stated that one of his most important goals will be to ensure the security and safety of the Congolese people, and affirmed his intention to "eradicate every form of insecurity and urban terrorism." He reaffirmed his support for opposition views and stated his intention to live in peace and good relations with neighboring countries. He stated his commitment to strengthening the institutions of the state to safeguard the balance between executive, legislative and judicial powers. He noted that the Prime Minister would be formally named within the next several days.

¶17. Kinshasa remained calm, with minimal traffic due to a declared holiday but with a heavy security presence provided by both Congolese and MONUC forces. Kisangani and Lubumbashi reported fireworks and exuberant gatherings by Kabila supporters. No security incidents related to the inauguration were reported anywhere in the DRC.

¶18. Comment. Two and one half years after the establishment of the Transitional Government, Kabila's successful inauguration is nearly the last step of the long, arduous transition process. Kabila said all the right things in his inaugural speech, which was well received by both national and international audiences. His actions in the next few weeks, notably the announcement of his cabinet and his interaction with the newly seated National Assembly, will provide a concrete idea of his plans in the first phase of the Third Republic in the Congo. End comment.

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